

REMARKS

In the December 14, 2004 Office Action, all of the claims 1-14 stand rejected in view of prior art. No other objections or rejections are made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

None of the claims are being amended by the current Amendment to overcome the rejection. Claims 12 and 15 are amended herein only to correct minor informalities. Thus, claims 1-14 are pending, with claims 1 and 11 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following comments.

Interview Summary

On March 1, 2005, the undersigned conducted a telephone interview with Examiner John Roger Paradiso, who is in charge of the above-identified patent application. Applicants wish to thank Examiner Paradiso for his courteous interview and the opportunity to discuss the above-identified patent application. Applicants particularly appreciate Examiner Paradiso's effort to communicate with the undersigned at the time of his illness.

During the interview, the rejection to claim 1 based on the Petrea patent was discussed. It was suggested that the Applicants submit a Request for Reconsideration in response to the Office Action for further consideration.

Specification

Applicants have found a typographical error upon review of the specification. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the specification to correct the typographical error. Applicants believe that the specification is now correct and complies with 37 CFR §1.71 and §1.75(d)(1).

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102

In paragraphs 1-2 of the Office Action, claims 1-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,864,895 to Petrea ("Petrea patent"). In response, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections.

More specifically, Applicants believe that the Petrea patent does not disclose or suggest a bend imparted on the strip in the transverse cross section of the strip, which is required by claims 1 and 11 as originally filed. It is not clear from the Office Action which structure of the Petrea patent the Office Action regards as the bend imparting structure, since

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paragraph 2 of the Office Action does not mention the bend. Also, it is clear from Figure 7 of the Petrea patent that there is no bend in the strip 36 in the transverse direction in the structure of the Petrea patent. Therefore, Applicants believe that the Petrea patent does not disclose or suggest the arrangement of claims 1 and 11.

Moreover, Applicants believe that dependent claims 2-10 and 12-14 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claims 1 and 11, and therefore are narrower. Thus, Applicants believe that since the prior art of record does not anticipate independent claims 1 and 11, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

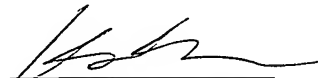
Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art references are made of record. Applicants believe that these references do not anticipate the claimed invention or render the claimed invention obvious.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 1-14 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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